Vietnam Veterans Of America

Chapter One

www.vvachapter1.com

FEBRUARY 2012

NOTE: In an effort to save time and expense in mailing the newsletter, it will now be emailed to any member for whom we have an email address. HOWEVER, if you notify us that you want to receive a hard copy, we'll be glad to continue sending it by regular mail. Simply email President Andy Megrath at vthogman@comcast.org and let him know. At present the newsletter goes to about 40 members electronically, saving the chapter considerable postage and time.

MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING
Feb. 8, 2012

Seven members attended, including Tom Truex, a transfer from Chapter 601 in Bennington.

The minutes of the December meeting were approved as printed in the newsletter.

Treasurer Ed Wiehe reported a balance of $24,071.84 in the chapter's two accounts. The report was approved without dissent.

President Andy Megrath noted that the Constitution Committee of the national VVA will voluntarily review the bylaws of a state council and local chapter. Andy, who is vice president of the Vermont State Council took on the task of having the State Council bylaws reviewed and sent in the Chapter 1 bylaws at the same time. The State Council bylaws had not been revised since they were written in 1995.

Andy noted that the Dodge House for homeless veterans has a young veteran in its newly opened women's unit. On the male side of the house are three men. Chapter 1 has been a significant supporter of the Dodge House.

After brief discussion, the chapter declined to donate to the financial upkeep of the deer population that resides on the grounds of the Vermont Veterans Home in Bennington. Food and veterinary services are an expense, but the feeling seemed to be that it was not an appropriate use of chapter funds.

Andy talked about MyHealtheVet (spelled as shown), which can be described as a "gateway to veteran health benefits and services." The program gives the veteran a means to manage their VA health care online, that is, using a computer and the Internet.

As described on the MyHealtheVet website, the service is "a free, online personal health record. It is available 24/7, wherever there is Internet access. If you are a VA patient and have completed the In-Person Authentication process, you can:

participate in Secure Messaging with your primary health care team members

view key portions of your Department of Defense Military Service Information

get your VA Wellness Reminders

view your VA appointments

view your VA lab tests

view your VA allergies

In addition, "Veterans discharged after 1979 can access their Blue Button military work records, including the Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) codes, pay details, service dates, deployment, and retirement periods.

"You can use the VA Blue Button to view, print, or download your health data currently in your MyHealtheVet account. You can share this information with your family, caregivers or others. It puts you in control of *your* information stored in MyHealtheVet."

The website, **www.myhealth.va.gov**, also has further information on topics mentioned above. Vets needing assistance with getting onto the system can call Thomas Mock, the MyHealtheVet coordinator in White River Junction, at 802-295-9363, Ext. 5829. Mock has volunteered to come to Rutland to explain use of the system. You can do the identity verification process at the VA outpatient clinic on Stratton Road in Rutland, as well as at the VA Medical Center in White River Junction or other VA medical center.

MyHealtheVet can help younger vets provide information to job search and networking sites as the vets return to the civilian work environment from military duty.

On another matter, Andy noted that vets traveling to the VA Medical Center in White River Junction should be sure to ask if they are eligible for travel pay, as he knew of one vet who didn't know he could get it. While certain restrictions apply, many visits are covered.

Andy will attend the national VVA Board of Directors meeting in April in Washington, D.C., and will meet with Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders and Rep. Peter Welch while there. Andy will share a room with John Miner, state VVA State Council president. Andy is vice president and due to take over as president this summer.

Noting the limited funds in the State Council treasury — about $3,400 excluding service officer funds — Andy asked if Chapter 1 would pay for half the cost of his room, the other half coming from national VVA. Dick Doyle moved that the chapter pick up half the cost of his room. Seconded by Ed Wiehe. Passed unanimously.

Chapter Vice President Dave Mathis reported on the State Council meeting Jan. 7 in Rutland. He noted that when training is completed, there will be six service officers covering Vermont and New Hampshire. There is a bill in the Legislature to allow the first $5,000 of retired veterans' income to be tax exempt. However, chances of passage are said to be remote.

From May 18-20, the Vermont State Council and Bennington Chapter 601 will host a Region 1 VVA conference in Bennington. All VVA members are invited. Andy has the details. Dave also reported that Service Officer A.J. Paige reported $4,419,246 in VA benefits acquired in the fiscal year 2011. The figure covers an area that includes claims from several states and Canada.

Andy called attention to the checkoff on the Vermont state tax form where you can contribute to the Veterans Fund. Administered by the state treasurer, the fund is distributed by a board consisting of three members of the Governor's Veterans Advisory Council, two federal employees and some state employees. About $48,000 was raised by the fund, which is distributed by the board based on applications.

Brig. Gen. Thomas Drew is expected soon to pick a new director of the state Veterans Affairs Office, a post formerly held by Clayton Clark. There were 53 applications for the positiion. Drew is assistant adjutant general for the Vermont National Guard.

Dick Doyle moved that the present slate of Chapter 1 officers and directors be submitted for re-election at the chapter's annual meeting in April. Seconded by Jack Crowther. Passed unanimously. PLEASE NOTE, HOWEVER: Any member interested in serving in an office should contact the chapter and put their name in, or attend the meeting and offer their services.

Respectfully submitted,

Jack Crowther, Secretary

THE NEXT MEETING — OUR ANNUAL MEETING — WILL BE WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11, AT 6 P.M. AT THE CHAPTER OFFICES AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND, VT.

VVA Chapter 1
15 Wales St.
Rutland, VT 05701-4026

Address Correction Requested

Vietnam Veterans Of America

Chapter One

www.vvachapter1.com

APRIL 2012

MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING
April 11, 2012

Seven members attended.

The minutes of the February meeting were approved as printed in the newsletter.

Treasurer Ed Wiehe reported a balance of $25,485.94 in the chapter's two accounts. The report was approved without dissent. We have begun the transfer of our funds to the Heritage Family Credit Union, a change begun to avoid service charges the chapter had encountered with Citizens Bank.

President Andy Megrath noted that the chapter has 97 life members in our total membership of 136.

Dick Doyle moved that the present slate of officers be re-elected for another one-year term. The officers are: Andy Megrath, president; Dave Mathis, vice president; Ed Wiehe, treasurer; and Jack Crowther, secretary. Motion seconded by Bill Whitney. Passed unanimously.

Dave Mathis moved that the present slate of board members be re-elected for another one-year term. The board members are: Dick Doyle, Bill Whitney, Mike Divoll, Mo Burden and Bub Crosby. Motion seconded by Dick Doyle. Passed unanimously. Chapter 1 notes with sadness the passing on April 14 of Mo Burden of Tinmouth. Always a positive presence, Mo had served as a Chapter 1 board member since 2008. He served in the Air Force in Vietnam.

President Andy Megrath, who is vice president of the VVA State Council and due to become president this summer, is standing in for John Miner representing the State Council next week in Washington at the National VVA meeting. Miner, newly elected VVA Region 1 director, will be filling that role at the meeting. The gathering includes a state presidents meeting on Wednesday. On Thursday, Andy is slated to meet with the three members of Vermont's congressional delegation. On Friday and Saturday, the national board of directors will meet.

On May 19 and 20, a Friday and Saturday, there will be a VVA Region 1 meeting in Bennington. National organization representatives attending will include President John Rowan; Nancy Switzer, president of AVVA (Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America); and others. There will be discussion of the national constitution, pending resolutions and an Agent Orange presentation. On Saturday, there will be some advocate training in the area of government affairs. The Saturday session is due to adjourn at noon. Any chapter member interested in attending is encouraged to do so and should touch base with Andy.

Dave Mathis moved to approve use of the chapter's credit card for Andy's room and meals at the Bennington meeting. Seconded by Bill Whitney. Approved unanimously.

Andy announced that Aug. 4 will mark the 30th anniversary of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Sharon along Interstate 87. Ceremonies begin at 1 p.m. Various dignitaries, such as the governor, lieutenant governor, and congressional delegation, along with veterans organizations, have been or will be invited. National VVA President John Rowan is expected to attend. A patch, similar to the State Council patch will commemorate the event.

Andy further reported that national VVA has reviewed the Chapter 1 and State Council bylaws and recommended some changes. Andy had submitted them to national because he is chairman of the State Council Bylaw Committee. Andy appointed Dave Mathis to see to the necessary changes in the local bylaws. Andy has revised the State Council bylaws and planned to present them to the council April 14 in St. Albans. As an example of a necessary change, according to Andy, the current local bylaws do not list the officers or define the board clearly enough. Other parts of the local bylaws are taken from the national constitution, which is apparently not necessary and may be confusing, Andy said. In any case, no changes can be adopted until next year at our annual meeting.

Andy displayed a handy new booklet summarizing benefits available to veterans. More should be readily available.

After some discussion, Dick Doyle moved to donate $250 to the Friends of Veterans group. The donation will be made through the annual motorcycle run that benefits the group. The Friends' fundraising goal this year is $27,500.

In the past year, the group assisted more than 117 veterans and their families with more than $40,000 in aid at their homes or in shelters. By being a sponsor of the motorcycle ride, Chapter 1 will be credited with support on the motorcycle ride web site and promotional T-shirts. Motion seconded by Dave Mathis. Passed unanimously. Last year, Chapter 1 donated $100.

Andy reported that the Moving Wall, a replica of the Vietnam Memorial known as The Wall in Washington, D.C., is coming to Springfield from July 12 through 16. VFW Post 771 of Springfield and the Chester VVA chapter will play hosts. Donations to support the event may be sent to Ron Walker, 870 Baltimore Road, Baltimore, VT 05143.

There was brief discussion about the property tax exemption provided, by towns that have approved it, of $10,000 to $40,000 for vets that are at least 50 percent disabled. The exemption is deducted from the assessed value of the veteran's property. Andy noted that if a vet is permanently disabled, he or she has to apply only once. If the disability is not permanent, you have to apply every year. The state Office of Veterans Affairs oversees the list of those eligible. Check with your town's officials to see if there is a local exemption.

Finally, the annual picnic at the Vermont Veterans Home in Bennington is scheduled for June 30. VVA members from around the state volunteer to serve a meal to the residents of the home.

The following Chapter 1 members have chosen to have their email addresses listed in the newsletter to share with other members. Anyone who would like to add their name to the list can simply email Dick Doyle, who is maintaining the list. Dick's email is rpdoyle3@myfairpoint.net. Mass mailings to the list should be limited to Chapter 1 business.

Also note that you can have your newsletter delivered by email without putting your name on the list that appears in the newsletter. Just make it clear to Dick. Electronic delivery of the newsletter, currently about 40, saves the chapter postage. Names in boldface represent additions or recent changes. Here's the list:

Personal email addresses concealed

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13 AT 6 P.M.
AT THE CHAPTER OFFICES AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND, VT.

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Crowther, secretary

VVA Chapter 1
15 Wales St.
Rutland, VT 05701-4026

Address Correction Requested

4/2

Vietnam Veterans Of America

Chapter One

www.vvachapter1.com

JUNE 2012

MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING
June 13, 2012

Ten members attended, including new members John McLaughlin of Leicester and George Henry of Granville, N.Y. Also joining the chapter recently was Sal Clarino of Rutland.

A moment of silence was observed for Maurice Burden, a Chapter 1 board member, who died unexpectedly in April.

The minutes of the April meeting were approved as printed in the newsletter.

Treasurer Ed Wiehe reported a balance of $25,818.03 in the chapter's accounts, now transferred to the Heritage Family Credit Union, to avoid service charges and earn a more favorable interest rate.

President Andy Megrath noted that the chapter has 139 members and five associate members, the latter including his recently enlisted wife, Mary (Sissy) Megrath, now a lifetime associate member.

The annual picnic at the Vermont Veterans Home in Bennington will be June 30, a Saturday. VVA members from around the state will converge to prepare a cookout and serve it to the residents. Those taking part should plan to arrive about 10 a.m. Following will be the VVA State Council meeting at which Chapter 1 president Andy Megrath is expected to take over as State Council president.

Andy passed around copies of a "paper safe," prepared by the Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America. The item is a booklet for a veteran to use in compiling various kinds of information that his or her survivors will need at the time of the veteran's death. Such information includes service information to help a family collect survivor benefits, the person's final wishes, bank account numbers and the like. Andy Megrath will be getting additional copies for members.

Andy reported on his trip to Washington in April for a national VVA Board of Directors meeting, as well as a meeting of state council presidents. Andy met with each of Vermont's congressmen, Sens. Leahy and Sanders and Rep. Welch. He gave them each an Agent Orange information folder. Andy himself was exposed to the toxic defoliating agent in Vietnam.

Aug. 4 will mark the 30th anniversary of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Sharon along Interstate 87. Ceremonies begin at 1 p.m. Various dignitaries, such as the governor, lieutenant governor, and congressional delegation, along with veterans organizations, have been invited. National VVA President John Rowan is expected to attend. A patch, similar to the State Council patch will commemorate the event.

Andy relayed a report from Lou Lertola, a Vermonter who for a number of years has visited towns throughout the state to encourage adoption of the property tax exemption for disabled veterans. State law allows an exemption from property taxes of up to $40,000 for veterans who are at least 50 percent disabled. According to Lou's report, 2,147 eligible veterans out of 2,256 statewide are receiving the full $40,000 exemption. Towns have the option of granting a lower level of exemption. Lou reported that 27 towns with qualified veterans were not at the $40,000 level, but 219 are. Disabled veterans should check with their town clerks to see if they qualify for the exemption.

The Brandon American Legion Post 55 will host a free breakfast beginning at 8 a.m. on July 21. Veterans are invited to bring their spouse or a friend.

Andy asked for reimbursement of $56.19 for a dinner bill in Bennington at a VVA regional meeting in May. Andy and his wife treated national VVA President John Rowan and his wife to a modest supper. Larry Young moved

to approve the expenditure. Seconded by Bill Whitney. Passed unanimously.

We had a brief discussion of proposed revisions to the chapter bylaws, which Vice President Dave Mathis is in charge of. Secretary Jack Crowther submitted proposed revisions. A few more suggestions were discussed, which Jack will incorporate in the draft. The changes will be acted on at next year's annual meeting.

Dave Jarvie relayed a request for a donation in support of the Moving Wall exhibit, which is scheduled to be on display in Springfield from July 12 to 16 at Riverside Park in Springfield. VFW Post 771 of Springfield and the Chester VVA chapter will play hosts. Jack Crowther moved to donate $250 to the cause. Seconded by Bill Whitney. Passed unanimously.

Andy and Larry Young installed a new door on the small office off our main room on the second floor of the VFW building in Rutland. The lockable door will allow privacy to Department of Veterans Affairs counselors who may use our space to visit with vets in Rutland. Other clients could be waiting in the outer office, so there is a need for privacy. The locked inner office will also be the location for a lockable filing cabinet for documents of the VVA State Council, which Andy will head as of the end of this month. John McLaughlin made a motion to approve the purchase of the filing cabinet. Seconded by Dave Mathis. Passed unanimously.

Andy Megrath noted that while he was in Washington, D.C., over Memorial Day for the Rolling Thunder motorcycle rally, he was interviewed for a brief video produced by Mokie Porter, communications officer for the national VVA. The video may be viewed at YouTube by searching under "Rolling Thunder 2012: What Vets Know About AO."

Mike Divoll offered to share with the chapter information he has been compiling, mostly from internet searches, on Agent Orange.

Andy noted that Rutland's CBOC (Community Based Outpatient Clinic) will move the last week in June from Stratton Road to the Smalley Contractors property on West Street, near the Forest Street intersection.

Due to the recent death of Maurice Burden, there is an opening on the board of directors. Anyone interested in filling the position should notify Andy Megrath at 802-775-1745 or vthogman@comcast.net or attend the next meeting and express an interest.

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 12 AT 6 P.M.
AT THE CHAPTER OFFICES AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND, VT.
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS WILL MEET BRIEFLY AT THE START OF THE MEETING.

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Crowther, secretary

VVA Chapter 1
15 Wales St.
Rutland, VT 05701-4026

Address Correction Requested

Vietnam Veterans Of America

Chapter One

www.vvachapter1.com

SEPTEMBER 2012

MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING
September 12, 2012

Seven members attended, including new member Sal Clarino of Rutland, and one associate member.

The minutes of the June meeting were approved as printed in the newsletter.

Treasurer Ed Wiehe reported a balance of $22,540.13 in the chapter's accounts at Heritage Family Credit Union. The report was approved without dissent.

Old Business

Jack Crowther passed out copies of the proposed revised bylaws. He followed a template supplied by the national VVA bylaw expert but added provisions specific to Chapter 1. President Andy Megrath recommended that officer terms be for two years, rather than one, since there has been little change in the officer ranks.

John McLaughlin recommended that the annual election slate include the representatives to the State Council, as prescribed by the national constitution.

Jack Crowther noted that he had seen a solar-powered flag light in Altamont, N.Y., and suggested such a device might be purchased for the flag at the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Main Street Park in Rutland. The flag remains up throughout the day and night, but has never been properly lit, receiving only the light of a nearby streetlight. Andy Megrath said he would check into the matter.

Andy Megrath reported that he is traveling to Washington, D.C., in early October as president of the VVA Vermont State Council. He put his air fare on the chapter credit card but the cost will be reimbursed by the national VVA. Meetings of the Council of State Presidents of VVA and the national VVA board will take place. Andy became president of the Vermont State Council in June for a two-year term, replacing the long-serving John Miner of Bennington.

Andy reported that funds to support the expenses of Vermont's VVA service officers were in short supply. The service officers receive no pay but are reimbursed for expenses and need to be supplied with new computers and, hopefully, portable printers.

The State Council, which supports the service officer program, is due to receive $3,206 from the Vermont Veterans Fund, which is supported by voluntary contributions on the state tax return. In addition, Vermont's VVA service officer program has requested $20,000 from the national VVA, but there has been a dispute over the paperwork submitted. A.J. Paige, the best known of the VVA service officers, accumulates about $600 a month in travel expenses.

Jack Crowther moved to contribute $1,000 to support the service officer program, the figure recommended by Andy. The St. Albans chapter, with Chapter 1 one of the two best-funded chapters in Vermont, is expected to make a contribution as well. Motion was seconded by Bill Whitney.

After continued discussion about the role of the service officers and the handling of claims related to Agent Orange, Jack Crowther moved that debate cease (called "moving the question"). That motion was seconded by Sal Clarino and passed unanimously.

Without further debate, the question of contributing the $1,000 was called and passed unanimously.

On another matter, Andy presented the case of a female resident of the Dodge House for homeless veterans in Rutland. The woman had defaulted on student loans, and collection was in the hands of a collection agency. With a contribution of $100 up front plus $50 a month for 10 months, the loans could be returned to the Vermont Student Assistant Corp. for collection under their regular procedures.

Andy has spoken to the woman, who is dealing with problems that contributed to her situation. He recommended the chapter provide the support, pointing out that if the woman falls short of her commitments, the chapter is freed from further responsibility. Andy said the woman has a sponsor (a kind of support person and adviser) who is "the best" she could have in this area.

Jack Crowther moved that the chapter provide the $100, plus $50 a month for 10 months, so long as the woman maintains her end of the commitment. Motion passed unanimously.

On another case of a veteran in need of help, Andy Megrath mentioned the case of a former Marine with a leg injury. It may be a work injury, but his employer says did not occur on the job. A doctor involved wants to take an MRI image of the leg, but there is no insurance to cover it. The vet apparently is ineligible for VA treatment, for reasons that remain obscure. The Dodge House director, Christine Morgan, brought the case to Andy's attention. The meeting took no action, the consensus seeming to be that more information was needed. The veteran evidently has an honorable discharge.

Andy Megrath requested $199 for a computer program that will allow him to update the chapter's website, www.vvachapter1.com. Chapter 1 purchased Andy a laptop computer in the past year to take with him on chapter and state council business, but he uses his own desktop computer for much of his VVA work, including updating the website. The computer recently failed, so Andy bought a new one at his own expense. The new program is needed to restore the capability he had to work on the website.

Jack Crowther moved to approve the $199 for the program. Seconded by Sal Clarino. Passed unanimously.

Sal Clarino has volunteered to fill a vacant seat on the Chapter 1 Board of Directors. The opening occurred when Mo Burden of Tinmouth died unexpectedly in April. Sal will fill the slot immediately.

John McLaughlin reported on a VA decision regarding Marines exposed to toxins at Camp Lejeune, N.C., through the water system. As taken from the VA website, here is a capsule summary:

Under a law signed Aug. 6, 2012, Veterans and family members who served on active duty or resided at Camp Lejeune for 30 days or more between Jan. 1, 1957 and Dec. 31, 1987 may be eligible for medical care through VA for 15 health conditions.

Chapter 1 member Kerry O'hara had donated the following books to the chapter, and they may be signed out at the chapter offices at the VFW at 15 Wales St., Rutland: The Wall That Heals, by Jan Scuggs; Recondo, by Larry Chambers; Delta Force, by Charlie Beckwith; Pathfinder, First In, Last Out, by Richard R. Burns; A POW Story: 2801 Days in Hanoi, by Larry Guarino; From Classrooms to Claymores, by Ches Schneider; We Are Soldiers Still, by Harold Moore; One More Mission, by Oliver North; First Seal, by Roy Boehm; Scars and Stripes, by Eugene McDaniel; Marine Rifleman, by Wesley L. Fox; and My American Journey, by Colin Powell.

In addition, Andy Megrath has contributed Saber's Edge: A Combat Medic in Ramadi, Iraq, signed by author Thomas A. Middleton. Come to a meeting or ask an officer or board member to retrieve one of these books for you.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE WEDNESDAY, NOV. 14, AT 6 P.M.
AT THE CHAPTER OFFICES AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND, VT.
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS WILL MEET BRIEFLY AT THE START OF THE MEETING.

Respectfully submitted, Jack Crowther, secretary

VVA Chapter 1
15 Wales St.
Rutland, VT 05701-4026

Address Correction Requested

Vietnam Veterans Of America

Chapter One

www.vvachapter1.com

NOVEMBER 2012

MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING
November 14, 2012

In accordance with national requirements of the Vietnam Veterans of America, the Chapter 1 Board of Directors gathered in advance of the regular Chapter 1 meeting. However, no actions were taken by the board.

Seven members attended the regular Chapter 1 meeting.

The minutes of the September meeting were approved as printed in the newsletter.

Treasurer Ed Wiehe reported a balance of $24,379.25 in the chapter's accounts at Heritage Family Credit Union. The report was approved without dissent.

President Andy Megrath noted that our member and benefactor, Carl Baldwin of Santa Fe, N. Mex., had again made a generous donation to the chapter of $250.

The Boys and Girls Club of Rutland County, which Chapter 1 has supported in the past, made a request for financial support in its $40,000 fund drive. After some discussion, Dave Mathis moved to make a donation of $1,000. Seconded by Jack Crowther. Passed unanimously.

A request for donations from the Green Mountain Boy Scout Council, based in Waterbury, was set aside, as there was no guarantee the funds would be used locally.

Andy Megrath described a six-day, five night event being held April 15-18, 2013, in Pigeon Forge, Tenn., to honor Vietnam veterans. Entitled "Welcome Home Vietnam: The Parade They Never Got." Pigeon Forge is a tourist destination, and promotional material supplied notes that sponsors include not only the VVA State Council of Tennessee but the town of Pigeon Forge, the Theaters of the Smokies and the Travel Alliance Partners. Dolly Parton's Dollywood and Dixie Stampede are among the attractions in Pigeon Forge. Anyone interested can get more information by calling U.S. Tours at 304-485-8687 or visiting the website www.WelcomeHomeVietnam.com. Persons interested can take a bus tour from Burlington or provide their own transportation and arrange lodging at available locations.

Jack Crowther passed out copies of the latest revision of the proposed chapter bylaws. With a few minor edits, the bylaws are complete, barring further changes. The proposed new bylaws can be seen on the Chapter 1 website, www.vvachapter1.com, at the end of the electronic posting of this Nov. 14 newsletter. Following any further revisions, they will be voted on at the next annual meeting of the chapter in April. If you are reading the printed version of the newsletter, you may check the electronic version of the newsletter on the website to read the bylaw revisions. Or write Jack Crowther for a hard copy at 29 Giorgetti Blvd., Rutland, VT 05701. Comments or suggestions should be sent to the chapter at VVA Chapter 1, 15 Wales St., Rutland, VT 05701-4026 or emailed to Andy Megrath at vthogmanATcomcast.net.

Andy passed around a sticker that calls attention to the 50th anniversary of the start of the Vietnam War. From what could be gleaned from the printed material and a quick look at the website, www.VietnamWar50th.com, the commemoration began around last Memorial Day with a presidential proclamation and ceremony at The Wall. Events will evidently be ongoing, with the objective of honoring "Vietnam War veterans and their families, the fallen, the wounded, those who were held as prisoners of war, those listed as missing and unaccounted for, the home front, federal agencies, all organizations that served or supported the armed forces, and our allies." The commemoration will feature hometown events, complemented by state, regional, national and international events. Check the above website for further details or to see about becoming an official Commemorative Partner.

Andy and the Chapter 1 board received a letter from a woman living at the Dodge House for homeless veterans, expressing thanks for assistance the chapter is providing to help her with student loans. The assistance will not pay off the loans but will pay a fee to the collection agency that is seeking to collect on the loans. After 10 months of payments totaling $600, the loans will go back in the hands of the Vermont Student Assistance Corp., which will then assume the job of collecting the loans.

The woman thanked the chapter for taking "an enormous amount of stress off of my life." She also described treatment and counseling she is undergoing and her plans for future treatment for PTSD. "As a person I'm learning a new way of life and it's because of people like Andy and all of you that I am afforded the opportunity to do just that, so I thank all of you from the bottom of my heart." The Dodge House, which Chapter 1 regularly supports, now has three male and two female residents in the two structures at the Dodge House.

Andy noted that he had put charges for his October trip to Washington, D.C., for meetings of the VVA Council of State Presidents and the national VVA Board of Directors on the chapter credit card. The national organization will reimburse the chapter, however.

Andy noted that the next day he would be traveling to Montpelier to meet with Gov. Peter Shumlin and the Governor's Veterans Advisory Council. Andy sits on the council and is on the Legislative Committee. Among the measures that the council will push for are having a veteran identification on Vermont driver's licenses, a practice in a number of other states. The council will also push to have the five moose hunting permits allocated to veterans parceled out among all veterans. At present, only veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan are eligible.

In addition, the group will ask to have VA compensation deleted from the calculation of "household income" on the Vermont state income tax form. Household income is used to calculate eligibility for an individual or couple's deduction on property taxes. The council will also ask that the state Veterans Affairs Office organize a veterans fair sometime around Veterans Day.

Andy noted that the state Veterans Affairs Office would be handing out medals supplied by the Korean government to Korean War vets the next day in Montpelier. The medals commemorate the 60th anniversary of the start of the Korean War.

Dave Mathis moved that Andy be allowed to use the chapter credit card for a trip to Jacksonville, Fla., for the next VVA Council Presidents meeting from Jan. 3 to 6. The cost normally would be born by the Vermont State Council, but that body has less than $3,000 in funds. As a result, Andy's expenses may be reimbursed under a "hardship" grant from the national organization. In the meantime, Dave moved that Andy be allowed to use the credit card. Seconded by Jack Crowther. Passed unanimously.

Board member Bub Crosby of Bridport regretfully asked Andy to be relieved of his post because of difficulty attending the meetings. The board accepted the resignation with regret, knowing Bub has experienced some health problems. Andy then appointed John McLaughlin to the vacant seat. John has also agreed to serve as a representative to the Vermont State Council, along with Dave Mathis. For now, Bub remains the Chapter 1 chaplain. If someone in the chapter is willing to serve as chaplain and be available for occasional ceremonial occasions that call for a prayer, please contact Andy Megrath at vthogmanATcomcast.net or 802-775-1745.

Andy Megrath noted that he and chapter Vice President Dave Mathis had attended a meeting of the Rutland Kiwanis Club, where Andy spoke about the chapter's activities.

Kerry O'Hara, one of our members, has continued his donations from his personal library to the chapter library, available to members. The latest contributions are as follows: A Hundred Feet Over Hell, by Jim Hooper; To the Limit, by Tom A. Johnson; Flying Through Midnight, by John T. Halliday; Medal of Honor, by Master Sgt. Roy Benavidez; Eye of the Tiger, by John Edmund Delenzen; and Firebirds, by Chuck Carlock.

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE WEDNESDAY, JAN. 9, AT 6 P.M.
AT THE CHAPTER OFFICES AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND, VT.
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS WILL MEET BRIEFLY BEFORE THE START OF THE MEETING.

Respectfully submitted, Jack Crowther, secretary

VVA Chapter 1
15 Wales St.
Rutland, VT 05701-4026

Address Correction Requested